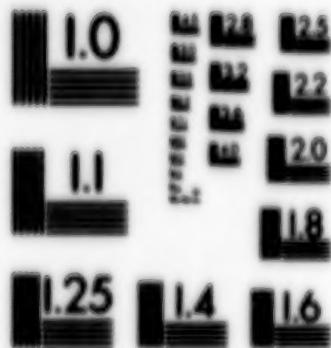


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9 February 1981

Worldwide Report

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

No. 288



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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9 February 1981

**WORLDWIDE REPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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CONTENTS

ASIA

AUSTRALIA

EPA Director Attacks Environmental Extremists (THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, 29 Nov 80).....	1
Young Liberals Adopt Pro-Environmentalist Positions (Sarah Chester; THE AGE, 6 Jan 81).....	3
City Council Rapped for Policies on Parks, Creeks (THE COURIER-MAIL, 15 Dec 80).....	5
First Steps Taken to Clean Up Pollution of Sydney Beaches (THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 17 Dec 80).....	7
Queensland Areas Included in National Heritage List (THE COURIER-MAIL, 27 Nov 80).....	9
Coastal Bushland in South Marked for National Park (THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, 1 Dec 80).....	10
Environmental Impact on Hunter Valley Mining Noted (Joseph Glascott; THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 29 Nov, 2 Dec 80) ..	12
Conservationist's Warning	
Government Ban	
Coal Mining Will Strain Hunter Valley Resources (THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 20 Dec 80).....	15
Hunter Valley Smelter Temed No Environmental Threat (Peter Terry; THE FINANCIAL AUSTRALIAN, 8 Dec 80).....	17

Problems Beset Planned Alcoa Smelter in Portland (THE COURIER-MAIL, 25 Nov, 11 Dec 80; THE AGE, various dates).....	18
Aboriginal Claim	
Continued Resistance, by Paul Robinson	
Proposed Law Reform, by Paul Robinson	
Arrests, Melbourne Protest	
Impact Report Changes, by Rod Usher	
Fluoride Emissions, by Peter Roberts	
Planned Smelters in West Stir Environmentalists (Steve Harvey; THE AUSTRALIAN, 2 Jan 81).....	24
Smelter May Harm Plants, Livestock But Not People (THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, 1 Dec 80).....	25
Pressure Grows on NSW To Open Up Sand Mining (Peter Terry; THE FINANCIAL AUSTRALIAN, 18 Dec 80).....	27
Sand Mining on Fraser Island Banned 'For all Time' (Various sources, various dates).....	29
Prime Minister's Statement, by Wallace Brown	
Opposing View	
Mining Industry Retort, by Des Keegan	
Pastoralists Query Actions of Miners, Bulldozers (Deirdre Ford; THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, 18 Dec 80).....	32
Conservationists Oppose Coal Mining Under Parkland (Joseph Glasscott; THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 15 Dec 80).....	34
Coal-to-Oil Plants Would Bring Widespread Pollution (Peter Roberts; THE AGE, 4 Dec 80).....	36
Support for Logging of Washpool Coachwood Ignites Row (Catherine Harper; THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 24 Dec 80).....	38
Clash Over Franklin, Gordon River Dam Intensifies (Various sources, various dates).....	39
Rival Plans, by Peter Dwyer	
Editorial Opinion	
Legislative Deadlock, by Andrew Tilt	
Constitutional Issues, by Peter Dwyer	
National Ramifications, by Peter Dwyer	
Darling Range Development Causes Environmental Concern (THE AUSTRALIAN, 28 Nov 80).....	45

Irrigation Licenses Threaten Murray-Darling Rivers (Vernon Graham; THE AUSTRALIAN, 2 Jan 81).....	46
Expert Warns Land May Be Devoid of Trees in 100 Years (Andrew Stone; THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 6 Dec 80).....	47
Thousands of Hectares in North Ruined by Salt Water (THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 20 Dec 80).....	48
Industry Report Calls for National Forest Body (THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, 9 Dec 80).....	50
Briefs	
Carnarvon Environmental Group	51
Sydney Parkland	51
Threat to Canefields	51
Barrier Reef Park	52
Murray River Cleanup	52
Sewage Crackdown	52
Inlet Sand Dredging	52
Hunter Valley Smelter	53
Wellington Salt Level	53
World Heritage Sites	53
Barrier Reef Study	53
HONG KONG	
Toxic Waste Dump in Tunnel Suggested (SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, 13 Jan 81).....	54
EAST EUROPE	
POLAND	
Water Pollution Control Problems Assessed (AURA, Nov 80).....	55
WEST EUROPE	
GREECE	
Briefs	
Environmental Pollution	57

EPA DIRECTOR ATTACKS ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISTS

Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 29 Nov 80 p 30

[Text] Extremist conservationists and developers have been criticised by the Environmental Protection Authority.

The director, Mr Colin Porter, said in the EPA's 1979-80 report that the battle between the two extreme views confused the issues. They did not assist the cause of sensible developments or sensible conservation.

He said that some concerned conservationists took a hard line on development, seeing it as the "thin end of the wedge," and found fault in every proposal.

On the other hand, some people supported development virtually regardless of environmental cost and discounted legitimate concern as being trivial and unimportant in the continuous quest for growth.

Mr Porter said that the EPA tried for a balanced approach in the long-term interests of the community and was attacked by both sides.

Preserved

The EPA report, which was tabled in State Parliament yesterday, cited expediency as the main enemy of conservation. It had to be fought if the best of the environment was to be preserved.

A good case could be made for each individual project, but it had to be considered as part of the overall picture.

"An environment is rarely destroyed or a conservation reserve lost in one fell swoop; more often it is due to a slow process of attrition," he said.

"Each incremental loss of degradation, may be minor in itself, but cumulatively the losses add up to an unacceptable sacrifice."

Mr Porter gave some examples: The excision of a small piece of a national park for mining or agriculture; the first subdivision in a scenic rural landscape that set the pattern for more; the polluting discharge, which is insignificant by itself but taken with others, destroyed the ecosystem; and the freeway along the river foreshore.

Outweigh

"The financial advantages may often be seen to outweigh the environmental damage or loss, particularly as they are often hard to quantify," he said.

"Yet, no one apart from a few extremists, would be prepared to accept open slather for mining, to have all our rivers fringed with freeways, or to see our forests whittled away," he said.

During the year, the EPA completed the environmental review of the North-West Shelf natural gas proposal by Woodside Petroleum Development Pty Ltd.

Mr Porter said that Australia's biggest resource development had some environmental problems, but they should be managed without difficulty provided that the developers exercised care and sympathy for the local environment.

The report was the first review of what the company proposed in terms of workforce and location and was seized on by the Dampier and Karratha communities.

They are disturbed about the impact on their services and facilities and the lack of educational, health and recreational facilities.

CSO: 5000

YOUNG LIBERALS ADOPT PRO-ENVIRONMENTALIST POSITIONS

Melbourne THE AGE in English 6 Jan 81 p 4

(Article by Sarah Chester: "Save the Franklin, Say the Young liberals")

[Text] Hobart--The Young Liberals national conference yesterday condemned the Tasmanian Parliamentary Liberal Party for supporting the State Hydro Electric Commission's planned Gordon and Franklin Rivers power scheme.

The conference overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling for the declaration of the Franklin River area as a "wild river" national park.

The Federal vice-president, Mr Saul Eslake, said that the Tasmanian Liberals were sadly out of touch on the need to preserve the South West Wilderness of Tasmania.

He said four out of five Tasmanians between 18 and 25 opposed flooding of the Franklin. He said that a further three out of five Tasmanians under 35, and 90 per cent of Tasmanian students, opposed the flooding. It evoked a great deal of feeling among people throughout Australia, he said.

A resolution moved by the New South Wales branch said the Gordon River should not be dammed below the junction with the Franklin River, and that the Gordon River should not be dammed above the junction with the Franklin River, before an independent professional feasibility study.

The resolution said the study should exhaust all alternative means of meeting Tasmania's energy needs for the foreseeable future. It also said the Franklin River should be declared a wild river national park.

Mr Eslake said that the Hydro Electric Commission had overestimated Tasmania's power needs in the past. It was time to determine the economic feasibility of other power schemes such as coal from the Fingal Valley and a cable under Bass Strait to transfer power from Victoria.

He said the South West Wilderness attracted \$16 million each year from tourism.

The conference adopted a resolution from the Victorian and South Australian branches urging the Federal Government to declare the entire Barrier Reef area a marine park and to ban any oil drilling.

Mr Eslake said all Australians should be concerned about the future of the reef.

The vice-president of the Victorian branch, Miss Louise Asher, who moved the motion, said the Fraser Government had said there was to be no drilling on the reef, but not enough had been done to protect it.

Miss Asher said that only 2.4 per cent of the reef had been declared a marine park and that the Queensland Government would be a stumbling block to declaring other areas.

She said that one Queensland Minister had remarked that "oil is protein, fish can eat it."

CSO: 5000

CITY COUNCIL RAPPED FOR POLICIES ON PARKS, CREEKS

Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 15 Dec 80 p 3

[Text] The Queensland Conservation Council has organised a meeting tonight with the aim of influencing the Brisbane City Council to change its policies on urban creeks and parks.

QCC co-ordinator, Ms Liz Bourne, said she did not think the council realised the depth of community feeling on the issues.

"A lot of people are upset that the council is just going in with bulldozers and turning creeks into concrete drains," she said.

"One group that lived near Mimosa Creek by Garden City Shopping Centre took the council to court and won over this.

"Another group concerned about Bulimba Creek has proved there are alternatives to concreting creeks and dredging them out.

"Through the Australian Littoral Society they have planted about 800 trees provided by the council along the banks of the river.

"The trees are helping to restore the banks and so revitalise the creeks."

She said the Sir John Chandler Park Association, which had successfully fought the Long Pocket Golf course issue, wanted to get these various groups together as they realised their case was not an isolated issue. It was Brisbane-wide.

Ms Bourne said the QCC was continually being contacted about parkland being ruined by either council rubbish dumps or spraying operations.

She hoped concerned citizens as well as the 10 or 12 recently-formed community environmental groups would attend tonight's meeting at the BCC environment centre in Ann Street at 7:30.

The meeting was expected to form a committee to lobby the council on these issues.

It was likely to discuss topics like the intrusions on public parkland by such groups as Meals on Wheels and the Girl Guides. In South Brisbane, a gravel yard had even taken over part of a public park.

"The demands on these public areas are increasing," Ms Bourne said. "As fuel prices get higher people will be looking to more local suburban locations for a lot of their recreation.

"They will be a lot poorer without them."

The meeting would also consider alternatives to the council's flood mitigation schemes. It was anxious to ensure Oxley Creek was not headed for the same fate as Hedron Brook.

"You'd think the council would have learnt something from the 1974 flood and developed a long-term land use plan," Ms Bourne said.

"Instead of turning the creeks into concrete drain pipes they could prevent people building in flood-prone areas and use those areas as parkland.

"Then rather than destroy the natural habitats for wildlife they would create corridors for the wildlife to move through."

CSO: 5000

FIRST STEPS TAKEN TO CLEAN UP POLLUTION OF SYDNEY BEACHES

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 17 Dec 80 p 1

[Text] The State Government is calling tenders today for the first work on a sewage disposal system that could end the pollution of Sydney beaches by brown stains, obnoxious froth and grease by the late 1980s.

Submarine sewers, running up to 3.5 km to sea from the existing treatment plants, will take advantage of coastal currents to disperse the effluent before it can wash back to shore.

The Premier, Mr Wran, last night described the tenders, for exploratory drilling only, as "a major advance towards the construction of deepwater submarine outfalls at North Head, Bondi and Manly."

He would not commit himself to a timetable for starting or finishing the major work on the outfalls which are expected to cost at least \$100 million at today's prices.

But if the project goes ahead as fast as Water Board engineers hope, it could be finished by the late 1980s.

Mr Wran said the exploratory drilling would provide rock cores from beneath the seabed to guide the Sydney Water Board in fixing the precise routes for the tunnels.

The tenders, which the board was calling in Australia and overseas, would close on February 17 with a view to a prompt start on the work.

According to Water Board officials, more than 900 million litres a day of sewage, treated to varying degrees, is poured into the Pacific from plants along the metropolitan coastline.

As well as the three major plants at Bondi, North Head and Manly, there are minor outfalls at Warriewood in the north and Cronulla in the south.

Cronulla and Warriewood are considered minor problems besides conditions around the big three.

The existing plants have been unable to stay within strict limits on bacterial content set by the State Pollution Control Commission, although the board says its effluent has "generally" conformed to them.

The problem of beach effluent has become the most offensive during industrial trouble at the pumping stations, when raw sewage has been discharged, and during adverse combinations of currents and on shore winds.

The worst aspect of sewage pollution for Sydneysiders has been grease, from both human and industrial sources, which escapes the treatment process.

It gets between joggers' toes at dawn, sticks to the bodies of sunbakers and causes thousands of board riders to wear wet suits even during the late summer, when sea temperatures are high.

The Manly and Malabar areas have been consistently the worst affected by pollution. The nearby Malabar outlet discharges almost half the effluent produced by Sydney's three million people and its industries.

The Water Board, which regards the tunnels as the only practicable solution to beach and Harbour sewage pollution, has already selected tentative routes based on sonar, seismic and magnetic studies.

The board is considering tunnels about three metres in diameter. Construction would start with either vertical shafts or sloping adits (entrance tunnels) sunk in the coastal cliffs at the existing treatment and discharge stations at North Head, Bondi and Malabar.

Then the outfall tunnels would be cut by "moles" similar to the machine used to build sections of the Eastern Suburbs Railway.

Effluent shafts at the sea end of the tunnels would discharge the sewage into the ocean at between 45 and 75 metres beneath the surface.

Mr Gran said, "The fact that our prized bathing beaches can at times be effected by sewage effluent is just not tolerable in our society."

6811 5000

QUEENSLAND AREAS INCLUDED IN NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST

Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL, in English 27 Nov 80 p 17

[Text] Most of Moreton Island and the Mount Etna limestone caves of central Queensland have been included on the Australian Heritage Commission's national estate register.

A commission spokesman said yesterday the commission had made its decisions, but had not yet advertised them officially.

He said the whole of Moreton Island, excluding four township areas, had been registered. The townships were Bulwer, Cowan Cowan, Tangalooma and Kooringal.

The Australian Speleological Federation vice-president, Mr Glenn Pure, said yesterday the listing of the 46 bat-populated caves at Mount Etna was a victory in the battle against limestone mining.

Mr Pure said the listing followed evaluation by a panel of independent experts and "objections raised by the Queensland Premier's Department to the listing were found to be not applicable or inconclusive by the experts."

Yesterday Mr Pure handed the Deputy Premier, Dr Edwards, a letter asking him for Liberal Party views about the Mount Etna protection issue.

Dr Edwards said the government had not been informed officially of the Australian Heritage Commission's decision. He was not prepared to comment until he had seen full details of the classification.

The other new Heritage Commission listings in Queensland are a small area on Bojangles Island; Cooloola state forest and national park; Coalstoun Lakes; north-west of Gympie; Bustard Bay near Miriam Vale; Corio Bay and Shoalwater Bay; the Conway Ranges near Proserpine; Lake Buchanan, 100 km south-west of Charters Towers; tidal wetlands near Cairns; an area between Daintree and Cooktown; and a north-eastern part of Cape York.

CCD: SGN

COASTAL BUSHLAND IN SOUTH MARKED FOR NATIONAL PARK

Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 1 Dec 80 p 10

(Text) The government has consolidated and set aside 349 square kilometres of coastal bushland as an A-class reserve for the proposed south-coast national park.

The Minister for Lands, Mr Wordsworth, yesterday announced the formal gazettal and vesting of crown land in the National Parks Authority.

He said that the reserve consisted of several big parcels of land.

It stretched over about 58 kilometres of coast from north of the Connelly River to south of the Meerup River.

The extensive Walpole-Nornalup national park already formed part of the proposed south-coast national park.

Mr Wordsworth said that another three A-class reserves totalling 17 sq km next to the newly vested parkland were expected to be ready to be considered for consolidation in the next session of Parliament, together with any other land that might become available after the current review of lease-hold land in the area.

The new land, identified as Reserve No 36996, had been named the D'Entrecasteaux national park section of the proposed south-coast national park.

This section, which also included Reserves No 26628, 28478 and 28479, totalled 366 sq km.

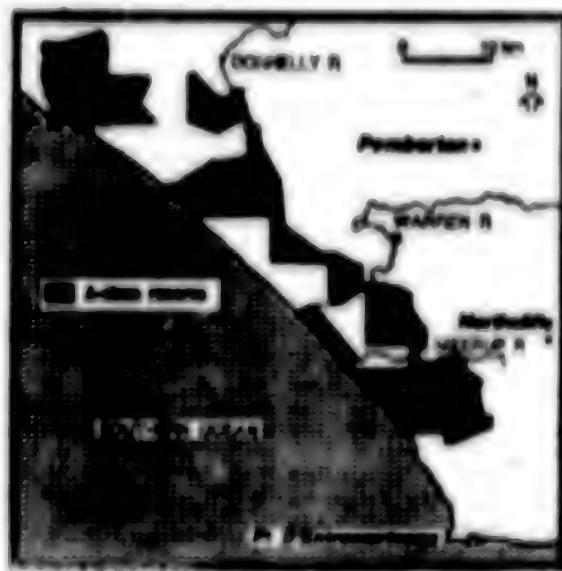
Undertaking

Vesting of the new 349 sq km in the south-coast national park honoured a government undertaking that a significant area of land would be set aside for the purpose before Christmas.

Mr Masters said that the proposed south-coast national park was part of a comprehensive system of national parks and nature reserves being established throughout WA.

They would include a wide range of land forms and ecosystems, with a variety of soils, animals and plants.

These parks would provide extensive scope for scientific and historical studies. They would also give the people of WA the opportunity to enjoy outdoor pursuits in areas representative of its original heritage.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF HUNTER VALLEY MINING NOTED

Conservationist's Warning

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 29 Nov 80 p 4

(Article by Joseph Glascott: "Coal Mine Moonscape Warning in the Hunter")

[Text] Vast areas of the Hunter Valley would become polluted moonscapes if planned coal mining went ahead, the conservationist, Mr Milo Dunphy, said yesterday.

Mr Dunphy, the director of the Total Environment Centre, said the state Government had approved 22 new coal mines, including huge strip mines, in the valley.

Development costs of the new mines were estimated by the Government at \$1,200 million.

The proposed mines, north-east and south-west of Muswellbrook would leave the town "an island among open-cut coal excavations," he said.

"The huge proposed exploitation of coal from the Hunter Valley is another big problem of the valley's industrialisation, apart from the planned aluminium smelters," he said.

"Most of this coal will be exported.

"The Government, by its rush to exploit the coal reserves of the State, is ignoring the fact that coal is the State's major power resource.

"The Government should be following a policy of coal conservation rather than one of maximum exploitation."

Mr Dunphy said that Dr B. J. Rigby, of the CSIRO, had estimated in surveys that at the present rate of exploitation, Australia's coal reserves would be depleted within 75 years.

Government Ban

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 2 Dec 80 p 1

[Article by Joseph Giacott: "Govt Scraps Plans for Hunter Valley Coalmine"]

[Text] Conservationists won an important first round in the fight against industrialisation of the Hunter Valley yesterday when the State Government decided not to go ahead with a large open-cut coalmine at Eraring.

Objections from the Environment and Planning Department forced the NSW Electricity Commission to withdraw its proposal for the mine which would have served its huge new Eraring Power Station project.

The Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Bedford, said yesterday the withdrawal followed an assessment of the commission's environmental impact statement for the project by officers of his department.

If the project had gone ahead the mine would have caused "significant environmental degradation" to the Coorabong-Lake Macquarie area, he said.

But Mr Bedford refused to release his department's report although he said he would consider requests for its release and take advice.

Mr Bedford, at a press conference, sought to play down his department's role in the Electricity Commission decision, apparently to avoid conflict between Government departments.

However, the Environment and Planning Department's objections to the Eraring project could set a precedent for other proposed developments in the Hunter valley.

A public exhibition of the Electricity Commission mine proposal attracted more than 130 private submissions and more than 1,000 representations.

Only one submission, that of the Electricity Commission, supported the project.

Mr Bedford said his department's assessment objected to the proposed mine on the grounds of noise, dust, water pollution and blasting effects on the surrounding area.

The large open-cut mine was proposed between Coorabong and Toronto, west of Lake Macquarie.

It would have supplied coal to the \$1,000 million power station of four 660 megawatt units now under construction and due for partial completion in 1983-84.

Mr Bedford said that the proposed mine would be completely out of character with the local environment.

"This was clearly demonstrated by the extent of the opposition to the proposal."

"He said the Environment and Planning Department had suggested that the Electricity Commission should consider alternative coal resources."

The decision on Eraring is expected to have an important bearing on consideration of future applications for coal mines, power stations and aluminium smelters in the Hunter Valley.

Mr Bedford said the number of submissions opposing the Eraring mine was not the most important factor.

"My department's responsibility is to ensure [as published] that proposed developments do not create environmental problems beyond control," he said.

"Industrial projects cannot be built without some disturbance but it must be kept to a minimum."

Asked about requests by conservationists for a regional study of the proposed Hunter Valley smelter and associated developments Mr Bedford said his department considered the overall effect with each individual project.

CSO: 5000

COAL MINING WILL STRAIN HUNTER VALLEY RESOURCES

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 20 Dec 80 p 5

(Text) A confidential report by the Department of Planning and Environment has forecast that the population of the Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone local government areas could jump from 33,000 to 57,000 by 1986.

The report is aimed at identifying areas needing facilities for the expanding population resulting from the coal-mining boom in the Upper Hunter.

It says that as a result of coal mining and electricity generation, 6,500 jobs will be created in the upper Hunter-3,500 in coal mining, 550 at the Bayswater Power Station and 2,550 in ancillary industries.

These figures applied to permanent increases in the work force and excluded construction workers.

The report suggests that 90 per cent of the additional workforce will choose to live in the Singleton Muswellbrook-Scone area.

Singleton and Muswellbrook would be most affected by the influx.

Between 1980 and 1982, about 355 workers and their families would move to Singleton, and 325 to Muswellbrook.

And between 1982 and 1986 this would rise to 1,100 new workers in Singleton and 1,350 in Muswellbrook.

According to the report, Singleton will suffer most from the strain on its services.

Water supply and sewerage would be of particular concern.

Singleton water supply is drawn from the Hunter River through wells and the report says it is now operating at maximum capacity supplying the 8,750 people connected to the supply.

The report says Singleton's sewerage system is in poor condition. Its present capacity is said to be 6,500 people, less than the present population, and it would cost about \$2 million to bring the system up to standard.

Muswellbrook's main problem was identified as a shortage of land for residential development. [as published]

The report says private owners have been reluctant to sell or subdivide their land and it may be necessary to resume land.

The report recommends that the Upper Hunter councils be given their normal loan allocations over longer terms to overcome initial financing problems.

The report says Singleton and Muswellbrook councils have requested short-term planning assistance.

CSO: 5000

HUNTER VALLEY SMELTER TERMED NO ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

Canberra THE FINANCIAL AUSTRALIAN in English 8 Dec 80 p 1

[Article by Peter Terry]

[Text]

DEMANDS by the NSW Government for detailed information on proposals for the controversial Hunter Valley aluminium smelter have forced the joint venturers to spend more than \$1.5 million preparing an environmental impact statement.

The mammoth report, released today, claims the \$400 million project will not cause any damage to the valley's multi-million dollar wine industry.

But the cost of the report, an Australian record, has created such a precedent that there are fears important new industries will think twice before considering investment in NSW.

Worse still, delays caused by processing the impact statement will cost the consortium, Hunter Valley Aluminium Pty Ltd, an estimated \$7 million a month.

Hunter Valley represents a joint venture between three companies: the US-owned Alumax of Australia Ltd (48 per cent); the BHP subsidiary,

Dampier Mining Pty Ltd (35 per cent); and Japanese-owned Alfari Pty Ltd (30 per cent).

The consortium is planning to build a plant at Lochinvar in the heart of the Hunter Valley's wine-growing district.

But the report maintains the plant will be so pollution-free that damaging fluorides will have no effect on vineyards, the closest of which is 6.5km from the proposed site.

A company spokesman said the amount of fluorides in the air would be below today's levels when the plant came into production in 1984.

The nearby Alcan aluminium smelter now was pumping out about 700 tonnes of fluorides without noticeable effect on vines, he said.

Pollution controls being built by Alcan would cut this level to about 200 tonnes before the new smelter came into production.

The new smelter itself will produce about 200 tonnes annually - a combined total of 400 tonnes, or 300 tonnes less than today.

As many as 1300 workers will be needed to build the plant, the report says.

It says when the plant is operating it will directly

employ 910 people and indirectly create jobs for another 2000.

The American-born general manager of Hunter Valley Aluminium, Mr Jack Miller, said yesterday he believed details of the project demanded by the NSW Government were "excessive".

"I don't know how you are going to attract new projects if this sort of thing continues," he said.

"They wanted fine details about everything - a detailed picture of water drainage around the plant; a detailed picture of landscaping; details of how we intended to process water."

"They wanted to know precisely how we would achieve what we said we would do."

"A smaller company could never afford an impact statement like this."

The statement will go on public exhibition, and a public inquiry probably will be held in April, four months after the joint venturers had hoped to start construction.

It will then be up to the NSW Government to give the go-ahead.

CSO: 5000

AUSTRALIA

PROBLEMS BESET PLANNED ALCOA SMELTER IN PORTLAND

Aboriginal Claim

Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 25 Nov 80 p 17

[Text] Melbourne—A Supreme Court judge yesterday dismissed an action by two Aboriginal women who claimed Alcoa was interfering with tribal relics on a construction site at Portland in south-western Victoria.

Mr Justice Brooking said the action had been shown to be "hopeless."

Last week the women obtained a Supreme Court injunction which halted construction at Alcoa's \$400 million aluminium smelter at Portland.

Mr Justice Brooking said yesterday the women had failed to make out a case under the Archaeological Preservation Act 1972.

The women, Mrs Lorraine Sandra Onus and Mrs Christina Isobel Frankland of Portland, described themselves as the custodians of sacred relics and sites of the Gournditch-Jmara people. They claimed construction of the smelter would damage Aboriginal relics.

Mr J. Dwyer, QC, for the women, told the judge they would appeal against the decision. He asked for a temporary injunction until the appeal was heard. Dr C. L. Pannam, QC, for Alcoa, opposed the application.

Mr Justice Brooking said because of his view of the case and the evidence of the losses Alcoa would sustain if the injunction was granted, it would be wrong to grant the injunction.

Continued Resistance

Melbourne THE AGE in English 1 Dec 80 p 3

[Article by Paul Robinson: "Blacks Set for War of Words on Alcoa Site"]

[Text] Bulldozers are expected to begin clearing land this week at Alcoa's smelter site in Portland.

Aboriginal protesters camped on the site believe that Alcoa will begin earthmoving works today after the Foreign Investment Review Board grants official approval for the project.

The Premier, Mr Hamer, announced last week that the board would give approval today.

A spokesman for Alcoa, Mr David Butcher, said yesterday that the company needed time to

"mobilise" his "people" to move in as soon as possible.

Aboriginal leaders say that up to 100 people are expected to try and stop the work starting by "passive resistance".

Sticky leaders from New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland have been sent to Portland to support the Victorian land rights campaign.

A member of the South Eastern Land Council, Mr Lee Russell, said yesterday that members of the Gundit-Mara tribe and representatives of the land rights movement would sit in front of the bulldozers.

Mr Russell said the Aborigines

"would fight with words" but expected to be physically removed from the site.

"We are prepared to put our life on the line here. If we get some racist pig behind a bulldozer there's going to be some bloody mess," he said.

But the blacks have set up a 13-tent camp on Alcoa's land. They say the area contains Aboriginal relics and is of special significance to local tribes.

Mr Buscher said the bulldozers would clear firebreaks through the land to allow for major earthworks early next year.

He said the company was well aware of the Aboriginal presence

and hoped that violence would not erupt once work began.

Mr Russell said the protesters were disheartened at the reluctance of the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, to intervene in the dispute when the minister was in his electorate.

He also criticised the union movement for what he described as its infatuation with Alcoa's short-term supply of jobs when the company's consumption of electricity would prevent other more labor-intensive industries from coming to Victoria.

Proposed Law Reform

Melbourne THE AGE in English 1 Dec 80 p 1

[Article by Paul Robinson: "Toughen Up On Sacred Sites: Law Body"]

[Excerpt] An Australian Law Reform Commission discussion paper has proposed that Government has proposed that Governments take wider powers to protect Aboriginal sacred sites.

The paper, part of a commission inquiry into whether Australians should recognise Aboriginal customary law, has proposed that trespassing on or desecrating sacred sites and objects be made a criminal offence.

The chairman of the commission, Mr Justice Kirby, said yesterday that the proposals could require the Federal and State Governments to draw up a national list of Aboriginal sacred sites.

This could be difficult because tribal laws and sacred site locations were often secret and known only by a select group of the tribe. Mr Justice Kirby said this could be overcome by making the location of sites on the list confidential.

Arrests, Melbourne Protest

Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 11 Dec 80 p 19

[Text] Melbourne.--Six conservationists chained themselves to the doors of Alcoa's Melbourne offices yesterday following the arrest of 16 Aboriginal protesters at Portland, in south-west Victoria.

The conservationists, members of the Portland Action Group, spent two hours chained to the entrance of the office, on the 16th floor of the AMP building in Bourke Street, before deciding to leave voluntarily. Police were alerted, but were not called in.

The conservationists staged the demonstration in protest at the arrest of the Aboriginals yesterday morning on the site of Alcoa's \$350 million aluminium smelter at Portland.

Police moved in at 9:30 a.m. to arrest the Aboriginals after they ignored a demand by company officials to leave the site.

The Aboriginals had been camped on the site for three months in protest at the destruction of alleged sacred tribal sites and relics.

Work began on the 400-hectare site at Point Danger, five kilometres west of Portland, last week, despite a protest by Aboriginals and conservationists.

The Aboriginals were allowed to remain on the site with their 12 tents because they were camped on a road easement which was still officially crown land.

But yesterday morning, Alcoa's Portland smelter project manager, Mr Clive Hildebrand, arrived at the protest camp at 7 am with a letter from Portland Council saying the easement now was Alcoa property.

The Aboriginals were given two hours to leave before police moved in to make arrests. The arrests were made quietly and no incidents were reported. Police later removed the protesters' tents.

The 12 men and four women were charged with trespass and released on bail to appear in Portland Court on January 14.

A spokesman for the Aboriginals said new ways of protesting against the smelter were being considered.

Impact Report Changes

Melbourne THE AGE in English 4 Dec 80 p 3

[Article by Rod Lisher: "Alcoa Evaluation Was Rewritten"]

[Text] Alcoa this week passed the final Government test (the Foreign Investment Review Board) on siting its aluminium smelter at Portland. But one of the most important tests the company had to pass--the environmental one--may have been done with considerable help from the examiner, the Ministry for Conservation.

The Ministry's assessment of the effect Alcoa's chosen site at Portland will have on the environment was rewritten at a late stage. The rewrite reversed the conclusions of an earlier assessment which said that the smelter should not be on the site chosen by the company.

One environment protection group said yesterday that the assessment finally issued by the Ministry called into question the credibility of the environment effects assessment process.

The Minister for Conservation, Mr Houghton, yesterday described suggestions that pressure had been exerted to have the assessment rewritten as "bilge." He said no political pressure had been put on him, and he had not pressured anybody himself.

The Ministry received 124 submissions on the Portland site from Government departments, conservation groups and individuals. Only five of them agreed that the smelter should be on the site proposed by Alcoa.

Among those bodies opposed to Alcoa's choice were the environment studies division of the Ministry for Conservation, the National Parks Service, the Department of Crown Lands and Survey, the Victorian Archaeological Survey and the Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium.

The choice of location for the smelter was between the western site, an area of cleared grazing land, and the eastern site, part of a stretch of heathland that runs down to the coastline of Portland Bay (see map). The sites are almost equidistant from the town of Portland.

Before it was rewritten, the assessment by the Ministry decided: "To protect the scenic value of the coastline, to provide an open space buffer between the smelter and the coastline, and to retain a major part of the heathland, the smelter should be on the western location."

The published conclusion was: "Considering all the issues concerning the two alternative smelter locations, the proposal (the eastern location) is believed to be preferable because of the importance that must be attached to air emissions and their effects on the town of Portland, and should be adopted. It should be recognised, however, that the proposal will severely affect the viability of the heathland area."

The original draft said: "As far as can be determined, there is no substantial difference between the two smelter locations from the point of view of the dispersion of air emissions and the anticipated effect on Portland."

There is also evidence that the summary and conclusions were watered down before publication. On air emissions, the original conclusion was: "The health authorities have advised that human health would not be affected by emissions from the plant. However, the predicted emission levels for fluoride give rise for concern because of their potential effect on vegetation, particularly in view of the smelter's close proximity to the town."

In the published report, the first sentence remains the same, but then reads: "However, the predicted emission levels of fluoride are such that there could be an effect on vegetation. No effect on animals grazing affected vegetation is anticipated."

In another alteration, the words "the heathland area" were changed to "some foreshore vegetation." The heathland has been a particularly sensitive issue in the arguments over the smelter. Some of the animals there are rare and at least one flower, Melville's spider orchid, is unique to the heathland.

Both the Ministry for Conservation and Alcos say that the decision on the eastern or heathland site was based on information that air emissions over the town of Portland would be greater from the western site. The deputy director of conservation at the Ministry, Mr Grahame Swarts said he though the in-shored that prevailing winds would be more likely to carry fluoride emissions toward the town from the western side. (as published)

Asked about the original statement that there was "no substantial difference" between the two sites for air emissions, Mr Swarts said the thought the information on wind movements had "come in quite late."

Apart from the more radical conservation groups, some of the Government departments which made submissions to the Ministry on the Portland assessment clearly have reservations about the decision taking process. The summary of the Crown Lands Department submission says: "The statement appears to have proceeded from the desire to justify an apparent prior decision to construct the smelter on the eastern site rather than effectively examining all the proposals to reach a logical decision on the appropriate location."

The director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Dr Jeff Mosley, said yesterday: "It is clear that the vital decisions--to have a smelter at Portland, to have a transmission line, to supply the power--were taken before the environment studies were made. It should be the other way around."

Mr Philip Sutton, of the Environment Action Centre, which is supporting the present occupation of the smelter site by Aborigines, said the real intent of the assessment had been reversed. There was no doubt that the smelter should not be there, he said.

Fluoride Emissions

Melbourne THE AGE in English 6 Dec 80 p 3

[Article by Peter Roberts: "Area Fluoride Count Will Be High: Study"]

[Text] Fluoride emissions proposed by Alcos Australia for its Portland Smelter are 40 per cent higher than those allowed in the United States.

This is a finding of a State Government study of pollution control technology being employed at US aluminium smelters.

The study, by Mr Peter Ramsey, a senior air quality officer with the Environment Protection Authority, recommends that Alcos be required to use the best pollution technology available. Mr Ramsey recommends that the EPA should license Alcos to allow the discharge of one kilogramme of fluoride for every tonne of aluminium it produces (1.0 kg/tonne). Alcos's design for Portland allows for the release of 1.38 kg/tonne.

By comparison, the Tomago group has plans for a new smelter in the Hunter Valley which will release 0.76 kg/tonne--just over half that planned for Portland. Smelters in the United States are operating with emissions as low as 0.52 kg/tonne.

Fluoride, in the form of gases and solids, builds up in the leaves of plants causing them to wither and die. Livestock which eat affected plants can develop bone lesions and lameness.

Alcoa aims to control fluoride emissions by 'scrubbing' gases drawn from the pots where aluminium is smelted. Alcoa has developed a highly efficient system which reduces potline emissions to only 0.27 kg/tonne. But the company has not proposed controlling fluoride emissions from two other sources at its Portland smelter. These are emissions from the smelter's roof vents (0.84 kg/tonne) and from the production of the smelting electrodes (0.27 kg/tonne).

Mr Ramsay recommends that electrode production be limited to 0.05 kg/tonne. All new smelters in the US have been required to meet this standard since 1976.

"Technology is available to limit fluoride emissions from the Alcoa Portland smelter to 1.0 kg/tonne," Mr Ramsay said in his report. He said this standard would allow for the occasional release of emissions up to 1.25 kg/tonne.

"If the preferred method of control is included in the first stage of the smelter, damage to vegetation should be confined to areas close to the smelter," Mr Ramsay said. "This approach should ensure that the beneficial uses of the receiving environment beyond an adequate buffer zone are maintained."

The EPA has not yet met to consider Mr Ramsay's report. However, yesterday the Australian Conservation Foundation called for even stricter controls than those proposed by Mr Ramsay. ACF spokesman Mr Doug Hill said that Alcoa should match the 0.76 limit being proposed by Tomago for the Hunter Valley. He said a higher limit would mean the establishment of a pollution haven for Alcoa. "The best technology should be used," Mr Hill said. "If Tomago can do it, we should require Alcoa to do the same."

An Alcoa spokesman said yesterday that the company was at least a year away from applying for an EPA licence for the Portland smelter. "Whatever standard the EPA sets, we will meet," he said.

The spokesman first said that Alcoa would have no trouble in meeting a standard of one kilogramme. However, he later telephoned back and said there could be problems in getting below this level.

CSO: 5000

PLANNED SMCTERS IN WEST STIR ENVIRONMENTALISTS

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 2 Jan 81 p 3

(Article by Steve Harvey)

(Text)

THE environmental protest over aluminium smelters has spread to Western Australia, with plans announced for two giant smelters south of Perth.

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, yesterday released details of a proposal by Alcoa to construct a smelter costing \$100 million at 1980 prices.

It would be the second smelter in the south-west of the State.

Alcoa's plans are for a site in the Pinjarra-Bunbury area, but the precise location will depend on the outcome of environmental studies.

The smelter, which would use about 40 megawatts of power, would be developed in two stages.

The first stage would commence production in mid-1982 and the second a year later, with both stages producing 120,000 to 130,000 tonnes of aluminium.

CONCERNED

Alcoa has estimated that about 75 per cent of its total expenditure on the smelters would be in Western Australia.

It expects to employ a peak construction workforce of 1,100, with about 600 people working on the first stage and 500 on the second.

Direct and indirect employment is estimated at 2,000 workers, with an operations workforce of about 700.

On Monday it was announced that a consortium of CRA, GECI and the Reynolds Metal Company had told the State Government it wanted to build a smelter, costing \$100 million at current prices, in the Bunbury-Chester area, 50 km south of Perth.

The consortium has given the Government the results of a feasibility study.

The announcements have sparked an environmental lobby similar to that over plans to build two aluminium smelters in the Hunter Valley, the wine-growing region north of Sydney.

An organisation called the Aluminium Inquiry Group yesterday attacked the West Australian plans, as did the Leader of the State Opposition, Mr Davies.

The secretary of the Aluminium Inquiry Group, Mrs Jill Reading, forecast that government approval of the

smelters could commit the State to nuclear power within the next decade.

She said the existing power supply system could not cope with an energy-hungry smelting industry.

State Energy Commission officials had told the group that power stations fired by coal from Chile would not generate enough electricity for aluminium production.

Mr Charles rejected the suggestion that conventional power plants could not supply enough electricity for the project.

The Aluminium Inquiry Group was set up recently by farmers from the south-west of Western Australia, who are worried about potential pollution from smelters.

They say fluorine fall-out could damage irrigation pastures and increase salinity in Wellington Water, the major source of water for the region.

Another fear is that smelter emissions could pollute the water of Leschenault Inlet, near Bunbury.

The State Opposition has called for a full public inquiry into plans for the smelters.

CSO: 5000

SHELTER MAY HARM PLANTS, LIVESTOCK BUT NOT PEOPLE

Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 1 Dec 80 p 9

[Text] Livestock and native plants could be threatened by pollution from a South-West aluminium smelter, says a State Government report.

The report was prepared jointly by the Department of Conservation and Environment, the Department of Health and Medical Services and the Department of Agriculture.

It rejects suggestions that people or pasture production will be seriously affected by the smelter pollution.

The report, consisting of preliminary notes on fluoride and aluminium smelters, said that in modern smelter plants the pollution risks were reduced by the use of modern technology.

Though aluminium companies could not eliminate fluoride from their smelters, the researchers had found that the companies usually bought sensitive areas near smelters as a buffer zone. The size of the buffer zone could only be set after the companies had produced detailed feasibility studies.

"In the vicinity of a smelter, fluoride levels in the air are not normally hazardous to human health but can be damaging to vegetation or grazing animals," the report said.

"Fluoride is an essential element for animal growth and production." The researchers found that under normal grazing conditions fluoride toxicity was not a problem. They said that gaseous fluoride in the atmosphere was a problem only if animals were exposed to high concentrations for extended periods.

Continued high levels of high intake could lead to fluorosis.

The symptoms of skeletal fluorosis were first apparent as lameness or stiffness and then as skeletal fractures. Feed intake, growth and production were reduced, but milk quality was not significantly affected.

Susceptible

The report said that cattle and sheep were more susceptible than other farm animals.

Humans could get fluorosis, with mottling and irregular growth of teeth, dense bones, arthritis and eventual kidney damage.

Plants were up to 1000 times more sensitive than humans to fluoride, but fluoride should only affect pastures near an aluminium smelter.

The report warned of high summer-autumn concentrations of fluoride in annual pastures used in dry-land farming.

The researchers said they would need much more information to define a smelter's area of impact.

The notes were to provide some understanding of smelter operations and the complexities of fluoride in the environment, with emphasis on its effect on agriculture.

The notes were not intended as a comprehensive review.

CSO: 5000

PRESSURE GROWS ON NSW TO OPEN UP SAND MINING

Canberra THE FINANCIAL AUSTRALIAN in English 18 Dec 80 p 2

[Article by Peter Terry]

[Text] Rising world prices have so increased the value of mineral sands that deposits "frozen" by NSW Government controls are now estimated to be worth \$282.5 million.

The figure, more than twice as high as when the bans were introduced three years ago, was released yesterday when the industry launched a concerted attack to have the decision reversed.

The campaign is being launched just as other mining interests have begun putting pressure on the Federal Government to change its decision banning mineral sands development on Fraser Island.

And, as on Fraser Island, the "frozen" NSW deposits are all found on sites proclaimed as national parks.

In 1977, the NSW Government told sand miners they had until 1982 to complete their mining operations in national parks.

The time limit effectively froze 45 per cent of the resources from development.

Yesterday the executive director of the Mineral Sands Producers Association, Mr K. Horler, said the MSPA was now seeking urgent talks with the NSW Government to warn that unless the restrictions are lifted "several hundred jobs will be put in jeopardy."

"Unless the Government changes its attitude the industry is doomed in this State," Mr Horler said.

"The arguments for mining on Fraser Island are exactly the same as for mining in the national parks," Mr Horler said.

"And as soon as it is politically convenient we will be back."

"The arguments against mining on Fraser Island are even less strong than those against mining in the national parks."

"Fraser Island is not the tropical paradise its made out to be at all. There is nothing special about it to the untrained eye.

"As far as the NSW national parks are concerned, our operations will only cause what geologists call: 'temporary surface disturbances.'

"At most the disturbances will only last for three years. We are a responsible industry. We can be relied upon to rehabilitate the area after mining is completed," he said.

"The trouble is we have a stubborn Prime Minister on the one hand and a socialist Premier on the other."

Mr Noeler estimates that unless clearance is given to open up the "frozen" areas in NSW, workers will be layed off within 12 months.

CBO: 5000

SAND MINING ON FRASER ISLAND BANNED 'FOR ALL TIME'

Prime Minister's Statement

Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 2 Dec 80 p 2

(Article by Wallace Brown)

(Text) Canberra.--The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, has declared that Fraser Island will be preserved from sand-mining for all time.

He said this in his weekly electorate broadcast--which outlined his Government's role in the preservation of Australia's heritage.

Mr Fraser gave as other examples: a commitment to protect the Great Barrier Reef, proclamation of Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, the banning of whaling in Australian waters, and assistance in establishment of the World Wildlife Fund in Australia.

The phrase "for all time" in relation to Fraser Island was used deliberately by Mr Fraser, and his statement puts him in direct conflict with the Queensland Government which has been urging him to review the position, and change his stand.

Mining leases and permits are controlled by state governments.

But in 1976 the Fraser Government effectively put a stop to mining on Fraser by using its control over exports to ban all exports of beach sands metals from the island.

The companies involved, Murphyores Ltd (of Australia) and the parent company Dillingham Murphyores (of the United States) have repeatedly sought more than the \$4 million compensation offered by the Federal Government.

Murphyores Ltd managing director, Mr W. Murphy, said last night he hoped Mr Fraser had not meant a total ban of all mining on the island.

"In reality he is not in a position to say this," Mr Murphy said.

"Our Fraser Island leases are State Government-controlled documents which would allow us to resume the mining and stockpiling of ilmenite tomorrow--if we wanted to."

Mr Murphy said that under the terms of the current lease his company could also sell 20 percent of what it minded [as published]--for domestic purposes.

He said he felt negotiations with the Federal Government seeking to lift the export mining ban were "proceeding in Murphys favor."

Opposing View

Canberra THE FINANCIAL AUSTRALIAN in English 4 Dec 80 p 2

(Text)

OPINION is hardening in the National Country Party against the Prime Minister. Mr Fraser's stonewall opposition to rutile mining on Fraser Island.

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Clarry Miller, (NCP) said yesterday he did not rule out mining on the island if adequate rehabilitation could be made.

He said proper restraints and restrictions could be applied to mining which would still preserve Fraser Island for all time.

Mr Miller was commenting on remarks by Mr Fraser which said the Government would "preserve Fraser Island for all time".

The remarks were widely interpreted to mean sand mining on the island was out for all time.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Anthony, is also in favor of highly disciplined mining on the island.

Mr Anthony said in August that the Government had responded to media pressure to ban sand mining on the island.

He said: "As the community becomes more informed and more enlightened as to what reclamation work is being carried out by the mining companies I believe there is a chance to see the projects take off again."

Mr Miller said yesterday that the sand mining group, Dillingham-Murphyres, could carry out successful mining on the high dunes on Fraser Island.

SANCTUARIES

There would be some difference between the new and the old vegetation, but proper rehabilitation would be possible.

Mr Miller said that if rehabilitation could be proved successful, the Government could reconsider further mining.

If that was the case it would be irresponsible not to readdress the question of sand mining.

With a sound tempo of intrusion into the sanctuaries, it would be possible to ensure the preservation of the environment.

If the meaning of preservation were taken to an extreme, Mr Miller said, it could be necessary to ban tourism and forbid any human intrusion on the island.

Dune buggies and other vehicles were already causing damage beyond what could be expected by a sound mining venture with adequate rehabilitation.

The Government's credibility had been severely damaged abroad by banning mining and offering inadequate compensation to Dillingham and Murphyres, Mr Miller said.

Mining Industry Retort

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 15 Dec 80 p 1

(Article by Des Keegan)

[Excerpt] The mining industry will intensify its fight against the ban on Fraser Island sand-mining because it claims the Government was badly advised on the issue.

A confidential report prepared for industry leaders describes the ban as "the greatest single blow to the mining industry in its entire history."

It claims the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, was misled by the Hootey Inquiry on Fraser Island and badly advised by his department.

Mining industry leaders say the sand-mining ban was a cynical trade-off to win a deal on uranium mining.

The result had been to gravely impair the mining industry's faith in government commitments.

The report says the mining industry believes there is sufficient doubt over the information on which the Government's decision was made to justify a review of the case.

It also stresses that trail bikes and tourists are "wreaking havoc" from one end of the island to the other.

C60: 5000

PASTORALISTS QUERY ACTIONS OF MINERS, BULLDOZERS

Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN (NEWS OF THE NORTH) in English 18 Dec 80 p 15

[Article by Deirdre Ford: "Pastoralists Question Jones"]

[Text] The Minister for Mines, Mr Jones, was quizzed by Meekatharra pastoralists about compensation for the pastoral industry under the new Mining Act when he visited the town earlier this month.

Mr Jones was asked about the new Act's provisions relating to damage of land and stock by mining companies, metal detector tourists and bulldozers.

It was up to the pastoralists, he said, to report any destruction so that steps to enforce compensation could be made.

"This is of no use where metal detector and bulldozer operators are concerned," said Mr Rod O'Connor of Annesas Station.

"These fly-by-night characters move top soil on alluvial patches and big trenches without any regard for conservation," he said.

"They leave areas that will never regenerate and are dangerous to motor bikes used on the stations."

Gates were often left open, and windmills turned off or wrecked, which resulted in heavy stock losses.

"All we can say about the bulldozers is that we will investigate complaints," Mr Jones replied.

"The metal detector fellow is doing his job and is finding gold. The high price of gold has brought prosperity to the Murchison and with it some problems."

Mr Jones said the Department of Mines was concerned about the problems but it was difficult or impossible to police the activities of metal detector users.

He said it would become law under the new Act that all damage on leases caused by mining activities must be compensated but it was difficult to take action because not everybody was caught.

Mining companies were now required to let the pastoralists know when exploration or other mining activities would be carried out on leases.

This permit to enter had to be prominently displayed at the homestead if the owners were not available and a copy sent by registered mail.

All people engaged in mining should have a copy of the Mining Act and should be aware of their obligations to pastoralists, Mr Jones said.

There were too many regulations to fit on the back of a Miner's Right--a suggestion frequently offered by pastoralists.

Under the new Mining Act, pastoralists would get compensation for any damage caused by mining to improvements to properties. There were related provisions protecting well and windmill sites.

Mr Jones said provisions would be imposed to protect pastoralists where large scale productive mining developments were likely to occur.

An additional section of the new Act allowed for a specific compensation agreement between the two parties or if necessary via a warden, in instances where deprivation, damage, or any severance of land occurred.

The Government had asked his department about what additional compensation and protection could be given to pastoralists where interference and disturbance to leases took place.

The owners of Tarmoola Station, near Leonora had solved the problem by selling out to the mining company, Murchison-Eyre MLA Mr Peter Coyne, told the meeting.

The property had been cut in two by the Teutonic Bore development in the middle, in effect creating two stations.

It was sold for \$500,000--a massive profit over the original price of \$45,000.

C80: 5000

CONSERVATIONISTS OPPOSE COAL MINING UNDER PARKLAND

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 15 Dec 80 p 3

[Article by Joseph Glascott: "Angry Reaction to Plan for Coal Mining Under Parks"]

[Text] A State Government proposal to permit coal mining under national parks elicited angry protest from conservationists yesterday.

The director of the Total Environment Centre, Mr Milo Dunphy, said that if the proposal were implemented it would be the worst blow ever dealt national parks in NSW.

The Wran Government's conservation standards would fall to the level of those of Queensland's Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, who was willing to mine the Great Barrier Reef, and those of the Tasmanian Government, which wanted to destroy the last great temperate wilderness in the Pacific region, Mr Dunphy said.

"The proposal would destroy the Wran Government's previously deserved reputation for conservation," he said.

"The Government would be abandoning the internationally accepted definition and concept of national parks.

"A decision to mine under national parks, together with the Government's failure to stop the destruction of the last rainforests, is likely to unite and politicise the conservation movement as never before."

He said there was no need to consider mining under parks for the next 50 to 80 years because of the large coal reserves outside park reservations.

Mr Dunphy was commenting on a State Government policy statement released yesterday which put forward the proposal.

Other conservationists said ground subsidence around tunnels, the construction of mine heads, ventilation shafts and access roads, and the pollution of streams would all seriously damage parks.

However, the Government's statement said mining policies had been developed to avoid damage and conflict with park usage.

The Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Bedford, said the statement was prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Mineral Resources.

It was the basis for resolving "a major land-use conflict which has arisen in NSW: that of dedication of land for purposes of nature conservation versus the perceived need to explore and extract the coal resources which lie beneath that land," he said.

It was prepared after an agreement between the former Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Landa, and the Minister for Mineral Resources and Development, Mr Mulock in April last year, during Government negotiations for the establishment of the Wollomi National Park in the Colo wilderness west of Sydney.

The statement said it was planned that the mining agreement should apply to Wollemi Park and to other national parks proposed on April 19 last year.

Under the policy, mining could be permitted in 13 existing parks and reserves-- including Royal, Ku-ring-gai and Blue Mountains and proposed reserves in the Sydney geological basin.

The statement presented a system whereby new national parks could be established in the Sydney basin without necessarily excluding underground coalmines.

About 900,000 hectares were reserved in national parks or proposed parks in the Sydney basin, with estimated coal reserves of more than 37,000 million tonnes.

The statement said four categories of mining areas were proposed for parks:

Special protection areas where no surface disturbance would be allowed. Measures would be taken to prevent subsidence. In certain cases mining would be excluded.

Restricted areas where some existing tracks could be temporarily retained for exploration. Ventilation shafts would be permitted under strict control.

Protection areas which would be buffer zones to restricted areas but some temporary surface works and permanent facilities would be permitted.

Mine service zones which would be relatively small areas where head works and transport services would be permitted.

The statement said implementation of the policy would require changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the Mining Act and the Coal Mining Act.

CSO: 5000

AUSTRALIA

COAL-TO-OIL PLANTS WOULD BRING WIDESPREAD POLLUTION

Melbourne THE AGE in English 4 Dec 80 p 15

(Article by Peter Roberts: "Five Groups Consider Coal Conversion Plants")

[Text] Five different groups are now investigating the feasibility of setting up brown coal-to-oil conversion plants in Victoria.

While no group has been prepared to commit itself to spending the \$3000 million that will ultimately be needed to bring a plant on line, this seems only a matter of time.

Investigations have already shown that Victoria's brown coal is chemically suitable for processing into liquid petroleum products. In fact, the joint investigation by the West German and Australian State and Federal Governments--known as the Imhausen study--found that brown coal from the Latrobe Valley would yield a higher proportion of petrol than black coals.

Synthetic crude oil from brown coal produces petrol and diesel fuels in a two to one ratio; black coals from New South Wales and Queensland can manage only a ratio 1.2 to one.

Victoria's agreement with the West German Rheinbraun company emphasises the worldwide interest in Victoria's brown coal. The other studies which also aim at full-scale oil production are being undertaken by the Japanese Kominiic and Mitsui groups and Australia's Moonee Oil which is working jointly with Arco of the United States.

Moonee, which hopes to develop the Gelliondale coal deposit in South Gippsland, is the only group investigating deposits outside the Latrobe Valley. Environmental constraints will probably limit development to two projects in the valley, according to Mr David Evans, a reader in the Centre for Environmental Studies at Melbourne University.

A single conversion plant producing 100,000 barrels of oil a day--one seventh of Australia's needs--would use 45 million tonnes of coal a year. The State Electricity Commission now powers Victoria with 31 million tonnes of coal a year.

Mr Evans, who did a pilot study for the State Government on the environmental effects of a coal-to-oil industry, predicts that the Latrobe Valley can cope with only two conversion plants. Air pollution, the drain on the Latrobe River for water supplies and the physical effects of mining would prevent more plants.

"The whole area would be transformed from an essentially agricultural and pastoral area to one that is dominated by holes in the ground, overburden dumps and industrial plants."

CSO: 5000

SUPPORT FOR LOGGING OF WASHPOOL COACHWOOD IGNITES ROW

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 24 Dec 80 p 3

(Article by Catherine Harper)

(Text)

The Forestry Commission has drawn up an environmental impact statement strongly favouring logging of coachwood in the Washpool rainforest of northern NSW.

The report faces the State Government with what is likely to be its greatest confrontation ever with conservationists.

The controversy may put odds, one of the Minister for Industrial Development and Diversification, Mr Day at risk.

The proposal for logging in the Washpool area, near Casino and Grafton, is outlined in the environmental impact statement which went on sale for \$25 yesterday and was not distributed free to the media as is usual with Government reports.

The director of the Total Environment Centre and a vice-president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Mr Mike Dunphy, said last night that the commission had been preparing the statement for two years and knew it was "dynamite as an issue."

It was so scared to produce the report that it had saved it for release virtually until Christmas Eve, he said.

The commission was going to tear into the last large undisturbed forest in NSW — the last major undisturbed forest in the world.

The Government would lose 80 per cent of the conservation vote and cause tremendous upheaval among Labor Party branches if it allowed the logging, he said.

There were 1,000 conservation activists in NSW and they would all be opposed to logging at Washpool, a natural area of critical importance and a "marvellous national park proposition".

The area contained the only major rain forest in NSW that had never been logged.

The Tersaria Creek controversy would be insignificant beside the opposition to Washpool logging.

Wildlife would be endangered, yet a comprehensive study of the impact upon species in the area had not been conducted.

In its report the Forestry Commission said that the proposed logging operation would provide about 68,000 cubic metres of rain forest

log and about 536,000 cubic metres of hardwood logs over the next 30 years.

Of a total rain forest area of some 10,342 hectares, a maximum of 15 per cent or about 1,550 hectares is proposed to be logged.

The report refers to a move to have the area protected because of its "wilderness" value but says this conflicted with the long-term plans of the Forestry Commission to log the State Forests.

It was clear also that the timber and associated industry form a major part of the economic base of the Grafton and Casino regions and employment in the area would be threatened if logging did not proceed.

Of the six Crown timber mills with entitlements to receive log supplies from the Washpool area, one had a significant intake of rain forest logs and was wholly dependent on the Washpool area as the last remaining rain forest resource within the Grafton management area of the commission.

In 1960 the Government made a fixed volume commitment of rain forest logs to be supplied to Big River Timbers Pty Ltd which at the cur-

rent rate of logging is expected to expire about 1990-1.

The only way to reduce the rain forest logging or to avoid it at Washpool would be by reducing or cancelling the commitment to Big River Timbers but this was "not considered to be an option available to the commission," the report said.

Mr Day was not available for comment last night.

[The controversy over the Washpool State Forest arose at the end of May this year, about the time when the families of the 70-odd employees of Big River Timbers approached the Government over the likely closure of logging operations for the Grafton mill.

[At that time Cabinet was considering proposals for limited logging operations in the forest to enable the Big Rivers operation to continue. Conservationists claimed then that the plans were to log about 70 per cent of the total forest area, including the rain forest.

[Cabinet decided instead to allow Big River Timbers to log in the Casino area after considering a joint submission from the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Bedford, and the Minister for Lands and Forests, Mr Gordon.]

CSO: 5000

CLASH OVER FRANKLIN, GORDON RIVER DAMS INTENSIFIES

Rival Plans

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 11 Dec 80 p 9

[Article by Peter Dwyer: "New Clash Looms on Dam Plans"]

[Text] Tasmania's two Houses of Parliament are on a collision course again, only two weeks after a confrontation over the State Budget was settled.

The Legislative Council--the upper house--will today receive a select committee report expected to recommend against the Government's bill for the State's next hydro-electric scheme.

If the council accepts the committee recommendation, it would again be exercising its power to reject a Government bill.

This could force an election or a referendum--both so far rejected by the Premier, Mr Lowe--or compel the Government to keep putting its bill forward until it is accepted.

The Legislative Assembly, Tasmania's lower house, has passed a bill providing for a hydro-electric dam on the Gordon River above its junction with the Olgas River.

But the select committee is expected to recommend creating a national park on the upper Franklin River and flooding the Franklin and lower Gordon rivers area.

This would rekindle a bitter two-year debate which led to a Tasmanian Government for the first time opposing a recommendation of the Hydro-Electric Commission.

The commission recommended the Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme.

"Strong Feeling"

Conservationists yesterday warned that they were ready to continue the fight to save the Franklin.

They said they had succeeded on the issue once, and would be prepared to take it before the people of Australia if the Legislative Council backed the Hydro-Electric Commission plan.

The director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Dr Bob Brown, said conservationists would work through the summer Parliamentary recess to try to save the Franklin.

Today is the House of Assembly's last sitting day before the recess.

Dr Brown said: "I don't think the councillors realise the strong feeling against the Franklin flooding proposal.

"A national and international furore would erupt if the Franklin-lower Gordon plan was accepted.

"If the select committee does recommend the way I think it will, it is making a wrong assessment of the community's feeling."

Editorial Opinion

Melbourne THE AGE in English 17 Dec 80 p 13

[Editorial: "The Franklin Must Be Saved"]

[Text] The beauty of the wild, scenic rivers of south-west Tasmania has become known to millions of Australians in recent months through books and photographs. It is now recognised as one of the outstanding features of Australia's heritage, one of those dramatic creations of nature which we should safeguard for all time. Yet even as the Federal Government is considering nominating the South-West as one of the three Australian features to become part of the World Heritage list, the rivers are again under threat of being flooded to provide cheap hydro-electricity.

Five months ago the Tasmanian Government decided to compromise between cheap electricity and preserving Australia's heritage by flooding one river, the Lower Gordon, while saving another, the Franklin. It was a second best solution and, like all compromises, satisfied no one. Now, after incessant campaigning by the Hydro-Electricity Commission and the Liberal Party to flood the Franklin, the compromise seems likely to be rejected by the State's conservative Legislative Council in favor of an HEC plan to flood both rivers.

If so, it would be a step backwards into another constitutional crisis in Tasmania, and into an ethos which regards no environmental treasure as safe from man. The report by the Legislative Council's committee on the rival schemes expresses the hope that at least the upper part of the Franklin could be saved for future generations. Such a hope is probably naive. If the HEC succeeds in having the decision made by the elected Government overturned, it will almost certainly press on with its fear campaign--warning of crippling electricity bills and no power for industry--until the whole of the Franklin is flooded, and its primeval gorges become another HEC lake.

The Council should not rush into a decision which would jeopardise the compromise that the Government has reached. In a conflict between the two Houses, the democratically elected seat of Government must prevail over an Upper House elected on one of Australia's worst gerrymanders. The Premier, Mr Lowe, and his Government should stand firm to save the Franklin. And the Federal Government, which represents all Australians, should use its influence--and power of the purse--to ensure that the gorges of the Franklin are preserved as a national park for Australians, and the world, of the future.

Legislative Deadlock

Melbourne THE AGE in English 20 Dec 80 p 5

(Article by Andrew Tilt: "Deadlock Over Flooding of Franklin Unresolved")

[Text] Hobart.--The Tasmanian Parliament last night faced a constitutional deadlock over the fate of the Franklin and Lower Gordon rivers in the State's south-west wilderness.

After a week of tense debate it appears that the outcome will remain undecided until at least February.

The State Labor Government has decided to save the rivers. It chose an alternative hydroelectric scheme on the Gordon River above the Olga River. However, when legislation for this reached the Upper House earlier this week, 13 of the Chamber's 19 members indicated that they preferred a scheme proposed by the State's Hydro Electric Commission which would flood the Franklin and Lower Gordon rivers.

This scheme was also supported by a select committee of the Upper House which investigated the issue.

In a battle of tactics the Upper House MPs passed the legislation through the second reading, intending later to change the name, location and cost of the power scheme. However, the President of the Council, Mr C. Fenton, ruled that the Upper House did not have the constitutional power to do this.

This led to a long debate over the powers of the Council and last night it appeared likely that it would kill the bill, leaving the next move to the Government. If State Parliament adjourns for Christmas the matter will remain unresolved until February.

The Federal Minister for the ACT Mr Hodgman, who represents the electorate of Denison in Tasmania, yesterday said he supported the flooding of the Lower Gordon and Franklin rivers.

Constitutional issues

Canberra THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN in English 20-21 Dec 80 p 2

[Article by Peter Dwyer: "Parliament in Turmoil Over Energy Bill Row"]

[Text] Tasmanian Parliament was in confusion last night over the constitutional rights of its upper house and the future of the government's controversial energy bill.

A majority of members of the upper house--the Legislative Council--opposed the bill but their constitutional right to amend it or introduce an alternative was in question.

There was a threat to the future of the president of the council, Mr Fenton, who said the bill could not be amended as the council wanted.

He faced a possible dissent motion which could force him to resign.

Mr Fenton, recognised as one of the most dedicated and respected members of Parliament, is strongly tipped as the State's next governor.

The council rose several times yesterday to seek further legal advice on its constitutional position and was still sitting late last night.

The State's top legal brains had been approached by both the Government and members of the council in an attempt to determine the council's rights. The council does have the right to reject the bill.

The crisis had deadlocked the Parliament for the second time in a month with the Government still determined to force its bill through and the majority of the councillors determined to oppose it.

The last deadlock was over the Budget which the council eventually forced the Government to amend.

Last night's crisis threatened to force further sittings of the Parliament during the weekend and right up to Christmas.

National Ramifications

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 24 Dec 80 p 2

[Article by Peter Dwyer: "Tasmania Row Set To Become National Issue"]

[Text] What is sure to become one of the most extensive and bitter public debates in Tasmanian history was launched yesterday and it is almost certain to spread across the country.

It involves the conflict over the State's next power development and already several federal politicians, including the leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator Don Chipp, are organising tours to study the project at first hand.

The debate will involve the Government, the Opposition, the legislative Council, conservationists and a powerful lobby which supports the State Hydro Electric Commission's proposals for the Gordon River area in the rugged southwest.

The Premier, Mr Lowe, fired the first salvo in the debate yesterday with a defence of his Government's controversial energy bill and renewed criticism of the Legislative Council's amendments to it.

The State Parliament is deadlocked on the issue of what new power scheme the Government should develop.

The Government put forward its scheme for a dam on the Gordon River above its junction with the Olga, but the Legislative Council amended the Government's bill in committee after accepting the principle of the bill in its second reading. Mr Lowe claims this was a breach of constitutional precedent.

The Government refuses to accept the amendments or the Legislative Council's right to make them.

The determined stands by both houses led to the deadlock which still existed when Parliament rose for the summer recess at 2 am yesterday.

Mr Lowe called for a full public debate on all the issues before Parliament sits again on February 24.

Developed

Yesterday the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and the Association of Consumers of Electricity, opposing groups in the debate, were preparing their strategy for the two-month confrontation.

The association has developed into one of the most powerful organisations in the State supporting the Hydro Electric Commission's plans for a series of dams in the southwest.

It has the support of former Premiers Sir Angus Bethune (Liberal) and Mr Eric Rees (Labor) and the former head of the commission, Sir Allan Knight.

The Wilderness Society has spent more than \$100,000 on its campaign to save the southwest since it began in earnest two years ago. It expects to spend thousands more in the next two months.

The society has organised a campaign committee of 15 full-time and 30 part-time workers.

Yesterday Mr Lowe said the program proposed by the Government would ensure the preservation of the entire catchment area of the Franklin River.

He said the Government felt that the Upper House had formed its judgments with "undue haste and without adequate regard for all the considerations involved."

CSO: 5000

DARLING RANGE DEVELOPMENT CAUSES ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 28 Nov 80 p 9

[Text] The Federal Opposition yesterday asked the Federal Government to review the alumina industry after a report that the health of Western Australians could be affected by developments in the Darling Ranges where major bauxite mining is under way.

Mr Tom Uren (ALP, NSW) said the Federal Government had the right to impose export controls on the industry.

He asked the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, if he was prepared to have the matter raised in a national inquiry.

Mr Fraser responded with a strong defence of the West Australian Government's record of concern for environmental matters and the health of all Western Australians.

He said Mr Uren would not advance the cause of any Australian by seeking measures which would stop development.

Mr Uren said the Australian Heritage Commission had reported that it was alarmed at the situation in the Darling Ranges.

The report said: "During the course of the year, the commission visited Western Australia and was alarmed by the widespread environmental problems caused by development in the Darling Ranges.

"Water production, timber production and farming are all being affected by increases in salinity and the spread of dieback."

(Dieback is a tree disease which is affecting the jarrah, a type of hardwood unique to Western Australia.)

"Very careful management of the jarrah forests seems to be of critical importance if a grave environmental threat, not only to the flora and fauna, but to the people of south-Western Australia, is to be avoided."

CSO: 5000

AUSTRALIA

IRRIGATION LICENSES THREATEN MURRAY-DARLING RIVERS

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 2 Jan 81 p 2

[Article by Vernon Graham]

[Text] The issuing of new irrigation licences is threatening Australia's most valuable natural resource, the Murray-Darling river system, a senior Liberal senator said yesterday.

Senator Don Jessop of South Australia called for a ban on approvals for water licences, particularly in NSW, until an independent inquiry had investigated the likely effects of additional irrigation development on the already-serious salinity problems in the lower Murray and Darling.

He has urged the Minister for National Development, Senator John Carrick, to ask the Murray River Commission to establish the inquiry.

South Australia, which depends on the Murray almost exclusively for its water supplies, has increased its efforts to stop the granting of new Murray and Darling river irrigation licenses in NSW.

In the past 12 months applications for new licences to irrigate about 60,000 ha along the system have been lodged in NSW. Many have been opposed by the South Australian Government, which wants a healthy flow of water.

The lower Murray--downstream of Swan Hill, Victoria--cuts through an area which was once part of the seabed, causing endemic salinity.

Increased irrigation upstream of Swan Hill would worsen this problem by reducing the flow of water in lower reaches.

Senator Jessop said about one million tonnes of salt annually flows down the Murray into South Australia, creating water salinity levels above World Health Organisation standards.

His stand has been strongly supported by the Murray Valley League for Development and Conservation, which claimed that the NSW Government will allow licences to be issued by administrative or executive decree if the appeals process becomes too bogged down.

CSO: 5000

EXPERT WARNS LAND MAY BE DEVOID OF TREES IN 100 YEARS

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 6 Dec 80 p 4

[Article by Andrew Stone]

[Text] Australia's rural landscape could be devoid of trees within 100 years, the director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Dr Geoff Mosley, warned yesterday.

He said trees were dying in all States at an alarming rate, and urged a national program to coordinate tree regeneration.

"As things stand at the moment with trees, we just tend to take them for granted," Dr Mosley said. "They are dying or just being killed off and nothing is being done to replace them."

A Victorian study revealed that 25 per cent of the trees in one part of the State died in a 20-year period.

The causes of death included disease, saline soil water and insect attack.

Pests such as possums and exposure after logging also weakened trees and contributed to their death.

Dr Mosley's call for tree replanting and protection . . . supported by the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Dr Lawrie Johnson.

"I think it's worthwhile keeping Australia looking like Australia. A great deal of character is given to it by its trees," Dr Johnson said.

"In this way we can preserve the particular nature of the landscape and of course, provide a habitat for insects and birds."

Dr Mosley proposed that as a preliminary measure, each State should earmark \$1 million for major reconstruction projects on rural land.

CSO: 5000

AUSTRALIA

THOUSANDS OF HECTARES IN NORTH RUINED BY SALT WATER

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 20 Dec 80 p 16

[Text] Darwin--When Dorothea Mackellar wrote her lines of the "stark white ring-barked forests, all tragic to the moon," she wrote of another time and another part of Australia.

But the starkness and tragedy of thousands of hectares of paperbark tree skeletons on the Northern Territory coast east of Darwin today would bring them back to anyone who learnt to intone My Country by Dorothea Mackellar.

Apart from the aptness of her adjectives there is no similarity between the poem and the reality of today.

The paperbark, hardly in the tradition of the elm or oak, is more a symbol of neglect, nonmanagement, failed opportunities, a reflection of a continuing unhappy saga in land use in the north.

Paperbarks are dying because they are being poisoned by salt-water intrusion from the sea.

The saltwater got in because of the habits of the water buffalo, *Bubalus bubalis*, introduced to Australia over 140 years ago and still causing havoc.

Through its movement, claim the experts, it has broken down natural levee systems along kilometres of coastline and the result is huge patches of dead forest.

Buffalo occur in northern Australia roughly from the Western Australia border to around Normanton in Queensland at the base of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Major concentrations extend from about the Daly River, south of Darwin, to Maningrida about 400 kilometres to the east.

A Conservation Commission senior wildlife officer, Mr Bob Fox, said some big areas of this coastal plain are a "conservation wipe-out" because of buffalo.

To the uninitiated everything on the plains looks normal, apart from the paperbarks. But a guided tour with Mr Fox would be enough to convince most that the buffalo has and is wreaking tremendous changes.

From a helicopter one can see neat channels across streams, billabongs and waterholes, and leading from high country to the plains. They are swim channels--a sort of wetland animal pad.

In the wet season, floodwaters move over this country and herds of buffalo swimming through the channels aggravate erosion.

"The land is on a one-way trip to the sea," says Mr Fox.

Pandanus plants dotted infrequently over the plain are dying, their roots have been exposed by buffalo and a good many are likely to be bowled over by floods this wet season.

Elsewhere Mr Fox points out small patches of native reeds and bamboo and a native pasture which he says has high nutritional value and can be managed to provide year-round feed.

CSO: 5000

AUSTRALIA

INDUSTRY REPORT CALLS FOR NATIONAL FOREST BODY

Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 9 Dec 80 p 33

(Text) Canberra: Australia lacks a cohesive long-term national forestry policy that fulfills community needs and safeguards environmental issues, says a report released yesterday.

The report, on Australia's forest-product industries, said that the lack of such a policy partly resulted from Australia's constitutional structure.

Under this structure most forests were controlled by State governments.

The Forest Products Industries Advisory Council, which prepared the report, said it understood that there was a plan to form a national body of representatives of the Commonwealth and State governments, forest-products industries and forest growers.

Such a body would be an essential step towards better coordination, it said.

Its formation must be accompanied by a significant reduction in the number of other committees and inquiries.

10 Proposals

The report listed 10 recommendations that it said required urgent government attention.

One was to ensure continued protection policies for the industry.

The report called for improved tax incentives and other practical encouragement for the Australian industry to invest in product-oriented and process-oriented research and development. Export incentives should be restructured to provide significant encouragement and to help the funding of the capital costs of new export-oriented projects by government-guaranteed loans, it said.

The report called for further taxation measures, such as allowing accelerated depreciation of fixed assets other than land. More rapid write-off of all environmental-related expenditure should be allowed, it said.

Adjustment programmes to offset unemployment in the industry was needed in the light of structural changes taking place.

BRIEFS

CARNAVON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP--A steering committee is to be formed in Carnarvon to examine dust control measures and look into other environmental problems. The Carnarvon shire president, Mr R. Pidock, said that a similar committee had been set up in Kalgoorlie while he was living there, and members had travelled to Broken Hill where they had been impressed with the spectacular success of its famous green belt. Some success had already been achieved in repairing man-made damage to the Kalgoorlie Boulder environment. Carnarvon could go on living with its dust problem or take measures to reduce it. He would expect a "dust control committee" to be able to advise the council on all environmental matters affecting the townsite and plantation areas. It would meet perhaps three or four times a year and would work best if the whole community took part, coordinating all their efforts, giving easier access to Government departments and possibly attracting more Government funds for conservation work. The council decided to set up the committee and offer secretarial services. All relevant departments will be asked to appoint representatives to the committee, as well as local bodies such as service clubs, planter organizations, the chamber of commerce and the pastoral industry. (By Elisabeth Williams) [Text] (Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN (NEWS OF THE MONTH) in English 11 Dec 80 p 3)

SYDNEY PARKLAND--The Federal Government finally has decided to relinquish control of prime land on Sydney's spectacular North Head. A 120 ha parcel soon will be handed over to the NSW Government for inclusion in the Sydney Harbour National Park. Earlier this year, the Federal Government was studying plans to use the quarantine station on the land to accommodate migrants. The final decision on the land use was announced jointly yesterday by the Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Newman, and the NSW Minister for Lands, Mr Gordon. Mr Newman said the Commonwealth had considered the temporary use of the quarantine station for accommodating migrants. But when all the facts were taken into account the Government had decided the prime use of the area should be for the recreation of local residents. (By Geoff Sorby) [Text] (Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 12 Dec 80 p 2)

THREAT TO CANEFIELDS--Up to four of Queensland's 30 sugar mills could be forced to close within the next 10 years, the Bundaberg District Canegrowers executive chairman, Mr E. H. Churchward, said in Brisbane yesterday. Mr Churchward said urban encroachment on cane lands and "landlocked" farms would cause the closures. The only way they could survive would be if they amalgamated with adjoining mills to form cooperatives, he said. Mr Churchward said some mills could be "in

"trouble" within two years. Mills which could be affected included Cattle Creek (Mackay District), Hambledon (Cairns), Quanaba (Bundaberg), and Goondi or Mourilyan in the Innisfail area. Earlier Mr Churchward, appearing for the Fairymead Mill Suppliers Committee, advocated industry rationalisation for improved economic operation before the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board's annual mill peak (quota) hearing, which will continue today. The hearing is combined with a continuation of the industry expansion inquiry which opened in July, and recommended an increase of 5 percent in assigned areas to lift sugar production by 150,000 tonnes. [Text] [Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 16 Dec 80 p 10]

BARRIER REEF PARK--Adelaide--The Liberal Party is increasing pressure on the Federal Government to declare the Great Barrier Reef as a marine park. The Young Liberal South Australian and Victorian branches are sponsoring a motion pushing for Federal action at the national Young Liberal convention which begins in Hobart on January 4. The resolution is expected to be passed. The motion urges the government to declare the reef a marine park and recommends the prohibition of all oil reef drilling. A supporting statement submitted with the motion describes the reef as "a priceless asset" and a part of the world's heritage. It says the risks of drilling and spillages are too great to take. Liberal Party support for the policy at the branch and sub-branch level has been steadily growing this year. [Text] [Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 27 Dec 80 p 11]

MURRAY RIVER CLEANUP--Sydney--The New South Wales Government yesterday announced a scheme to combat sewage pollution of the Murray River by pleasure boats. Deputy Premier and Minister for Public Works, Mr Ferguson, said the \$350,000 programme would involve construction of three effluent disposal stations. The stations would have facilities for pumping sewage from boats' effluent tanks. It could then be pumped into a local town's own system for disposal. [Text] [Melbourne THE AGE in English 30 Dec 80 p 4]

SEWAGE CRACKDOWN--The Brisbane City Council has taken action against a flour company which it claims has been causing breakdowns of the Donaldson Road sewage treatment works which empties into Oxley Creek at Corinda. The council works committee chairman, Alderman St Ledger, said yesterday waste from the flour mill had been killing micro-organisms which broke down raw sewage. The flour company has been ordered to cut by 50 percent its industrial effluent discharged into the Donaldson road system. Alderman St Ledger said the company would have to install a treatment facility for its own waste. Donaldson Road was expected now to run normally and Oxley Creek to improve in water quality. Good rain was needed to flush the creek out, Alderman St Ledger said. [Text] [Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 25 Nov 80 p 12]

INLET SAND DREDGING--Dredging operations to monitor sand movements at the mouth of the Peel Inlet at Mandurah will continue over the summer until about March. At present, the operation involves dredging sand from the western side of the inlet and transporting it by an underwater pipe line to a land dump on the east side. By carefully monitoring the dredging operations which will take place in a regular pattern across the inlet mouth, engineers and scientists hope to gain an understanding of the sand movements that have lead to seasonal blockages of the inlet's navigational channel. The dredging, which started last month is the first stage of a \$110,000, two-year project funded by the State Government that should eventually lead to a permanent solution to the sand bar problem at Mandurah. Part of the project calls for detailed measurements of sand movements which will be analysed by a computer. [Text] [Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 25 Nov 80 p 23]

HUNTER VALLEY SHELTER--The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, said yesterday he would consider making an approach to the NSW Premier, Mr Wran, over the environmental issues raised concerning aluminium smelter development in the Hunter Valley. "It would be a major tragedy if an industrial development was to so pollute the atmosphere that the produce from the Hunter Valley was affected," he said during question time. He said the industrial development was a matter for the State Government. But if the smelters were moved 30 to 40 kilometers there would be no danger to people or the vineyards in the area, Mr Fraser said. A NSW Labor member, Mr Charlie Jones, had asked whether Mr Fraser would consider setting up a House of Representatives select committee to investigate and report on the development projects. Mr Fraser said the Hunter Valley wine growers had competed against the world's best with their wine and had carried Australia's name in the most honourable way. [Text] [Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 27 Nov 80 p 10]

WELLINGTON SALT LEVEL--The salinity level in Wellington Dam has risen significantly in recent years, according to the Public Works Department annual report. The report, tabled in State Parliament, said that during 1979-80 salinity reached 970 milligrams a litre of total dissolved solids. The World Health Organisation maximum permissible level is 1500mg/l. During winter the deeper water became colder and more saline than water near the surface. Salinity was controlled by scouring the more saline water from the lower levels. Mundaring Weir salinity had been stable for almost 70 years. The report said that tests on WA water supplies found that two exceeded the WHO maximum--Cue (1900mg/l) and Balingup (1750mg/l). The PWD was trying to find a better quality groundwater for Cue. [Excerpt] [Perth THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in English 28 Nov 80 p 23]

WORLD HERITAGE SITES--Canberra--The Federal Government is considering nominating the south-western Tasmanian wilderness for inclusion in the World Heritage list. If nominated, the wilderness would join the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory as Australia's proposals for inclusion in the list of the world's natural and cultural treasures. The nominations of the Reef and Kakadu are expected to be considered by the World Heritage Commission when it meets in Canberra late next year. [Excerpt] [Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 6 Dec 80 p 11]

BARRIER REEF STUDY--A British charity has offered the State Government almost \$1 million for research work on the Great Barrier Reef. The bequest was considered yesterday by State Cabinet, which decided to set up a corporation to coordinate the scientific study. The Meagher Charity Trust has made the money available for research into reef biology and conservation, working from Raine Island. The trust made its offer nearly two years ago, a move that led to negotiations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The service suggested Raine Island, south-east of the tip of Cape York and off Cape Grenville, as an ideal base. [Text] [Brisbane THE COURIER-MAIL in English 25 Nov 80 p 3]

CSN: 5000

HONG KONG

TOXIC WASTE DUMP IN TUNNEL SUGGESTED

Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST in English 13 Jan 81 p 17

(Text) An old railway tunnel or worked-out mines could be used for dumping Hongkong's poisonous wastes.

But first the Government has to find the extent of Hongkong's dumping problems, especially with toxic or "difficult" waste.

To this end the Government is considering hiring consultants to study long-term planning for the interim storage and disposal of toxic wastes here.

The project, the first of its kind in Hongkong, will improve the consultant to list the present production of waste that comes into the category of difficult or toxic.

It will also look at various possibilities of interim storage, and investigate the need for especially-designed treatment and disposal facilities here.

According to the Environmental Protection Adviser, Dr Stuart Reed, a proposal was submitted to the Government shortly before Christmas, and "if it gets the permission and the required funds, work is expected to start in early summer."

The Public Works Department in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Unit is pressing ahead with this, he said.

Meanwhile, a search is on for possible places to store toxic wastes.

One possibility is the old Beacon Hill single-track railway tunnel.

"We are still pursuing the idea of using this tunnel as an

interim storage for toxic wastes," said Dr Reed.

Other areas being considered include the several abandoned mines in Hongkong.

"Worked-out mines have been used elsewhere as interim storage for toxic wastes and we think this area is worth looking at."

Yet whether storage will be needed hinges largely on how much toxic waste we have, he pointed out. This is where the consultants are needed.

"We are actually still a long way from establishing the size of the problem or whether indeed we have a problem of disposal of toxic wastes at all."

He added that Hongkong is more likely to be faced with "difficult" rather than toxic wastes, which he said included oil sludge, sludge from septic tanks or fly-ash generated by the new coal-fired power stations.

"My guess is that only a very small proportion of Hongkong's industry will produce toxic waste."

He reckoned about 10 per cent of Hongkong's various industries produce liquid effluent and fewer create toxic and difficult wastes.

"But this we have yet to find out for certain."

"It should be possible to dispose of much that we do have in controlled tips or other existing facilities with some hard-core residues exported for treatment at specialist treatment and disposal facilities abroad."

As an example of overseas treatment, he said a company using polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) — a chemical used for making electrical capacitors — was asked to

ship it back to the originator in the United Kingdom two years ago.

"This kind of chemical can get into our food chain because of its persistence and it does not break down so easily biologically."

"We were therefore reluctant to dispose of it here and required the company to ship it back to UK at its own cost."

Increasing use of "co-disposal" will be made in Hongkong in future, Dr Reed said.

He explained co-disposal was the dumping of a large quantity of harmless waste with a small amount of not-so-harmless waste in a controlled tip.

By doing this, the harmless wastes absorb and break down much of the toxic wastes, he said.

"Some will stay in the environment for a good while others will be transformed into harmless gases and liquids."

But in using this method, the major worry is that the liquid — even diluted — will be leached out of the tip to the surrounding environment by rainfall.

"Every precaution therefore will have to be made to ensure that this is controlled," said Dr Reed.

Nevertheless, he added that it has been the practice — even in the disposal of ordinary waste — to line the underneath of the tip with a strong chemical-resistant plastic membrane to prevent any escape of fluid into the environment.

In the long run, he said, a statutory plan for waste disposal will be issued for public comment by the Secretary of Environment. Mr Derek

Jones, under the Waste Disposal Ordinance which was enacted last February.

"It is a time-consuming process to prepare the plan and we have got a target of around mid-1982 to have the plan ready."

At the moment, he said, the Public Works Department has a 10-year disposal programme. But this new plan will look beyond the present period, he concluded.

CSO: 5000

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL PROBLEMS ASSESSED

Warsaw AURA in Polish No 11, Nov 80 p 1

[Article: "Sewage Problems Are Increasingly Greater"]

[Text] Every year we endeavor to describe in this place the up-to-date state of the purity of surface waters, acquainting people at large with causes of the increasingly worsening situation in this field. The growing number of effluents being discharged into waters, with the building of sewage treatment plants not keeping pace with it, is causing an ever-increasing pollution of our rivers and lakes. Only 12.7 percent of the tested rivers (15,800 km in length) have first-class purity waters, 31.7 percent second-class, and 26.3 percent third-class. The remaining 29.3 percent of the length of river waters do not meet the required standards. One should not endeavor to look for the causes of this unsatisfactory state only in so-called objective conditions, for the managements of industrial enterprises and municipal offices have a pretty guilty conscience in this respect.

During the past 7 years the trend persisted of a gradual worsening of the quality of waters. The extent of third-class waters increased 10 percent, also waters not meeting required standards increased 10 percent, chiefly at the expense of first-class waters. The purity of stagnant waters is likewise undergoing worsening. As many as 289 lakes with a combined area of 96,720 ha (46 percent of lake waters) fulfill the role of a receiving water body for residential and industrial wastes. Untreated effluents discharged by sewage conduits into the sea exert a detrimental effect on the quality of waters in the coastal zone of the Baltic, in particular on the sanitary state of seaside watering places, which recently had wide repercussions in the Polish press.

Our waters are being chiefly polluted by the industrial plants and cities, but also by agriculture which makes increasing use of chemical compounds (fertilizers and pesticides). In 1978, 4.6 million m³ of sewage requiring treatment was discharged into waters. Only 57 percent of sewage (including 35 percent in an insufficient degree) were subjected to treatment. The greatest amount of wastes is discharged by the iron and steel industry (11 percent), chemical industry (11 percent), mining industry (6 percent), forestry and woodworking industry (5 percent).

As regards municipal sewage, we should note a considerable increase in the number of our cities with sewerage systems. This has made it possible in the postwar era to increase the number of people making use of central sewerage systems from 4 million to 12 million inhabitants. In 1979, 2.2 million m³ of sewage was discharged into sewerage systems, of which, however, only half was treated.

The years 1971-1979 were characterized by a high growth rate. The expansion of sewerage systems and municipal sewage treatment plants cost 46 billion zlotys (including 13 billion for sewage treatment plants). This gave 8,700 km of municipal sewerage systems and 137 municipal sewage treatment plants with a total capacity of over 1 million m³, which constitutes a 74-percent increase compared to 1970. Thereby, 2.8 million additional persons benefit from sewerage facilities, and the amount of treated municipal sewage has increased by 660 million³. Unfortunately, only a half of the total amount is sewage treated with mechanical-biological methods.

In spite of the high growth rate of investment outlays, in recent years, as in the past, the pace of the construction of municipal sewage treatment plants does not keep up with urbanization of the country. In 462 cities, among others, in Warsaw, Lodz, Radom, Rzeszow, Torun, there are no municipal sewage treatment plants at all. Of 438 municipal sewage treatment plants that were in operation in 1979, as many as 200 did not achieve the assumed degree of the reduction of pollution, chiefly because of hydraulic overload of installations and excessive increase of the charge of pollutants. As before, 132 small cities of 850,000 inhabitants have no sewerage system.

For the years 1976-1980, the investment plan envisaged 16.5 billion zlotys for the construction of municipal sewerage treatment plants. By the end of 1979 only 7.2 billion zlotys had been utilized, primarily because of the lack of possibility to ensure the execution of installations being started, insufficient commitment of processing capacity on facilities being built, and late delivery of installations.

The erection of sewage treatment plants is being done by about 80 engineering enterprises of general and specialized construction. This has an adverse effect on the time of implementation of the investment and on the quality of work. In 1976, of 31 municipal sewage treatment plants 13 were put into service, the next year of the planned 37, 16 were put in operation, in 1978 of the planned 37, 10 were completed, and in 1979, of 42, only 16.

In the industrial plants the situation is also not good. In 1978, of almost 2.5 million m³ waste as much as 30 percent was not treated. Of the remaining 70 percent, as much as 49 percent was treated mechanically, 13 percent chemically, and only 8 percent biologically.

In the years 1971-1979, the outlays for the building of industrial effluent treatment plants amounted to 19.1 billion zlotys. This permitted us to achieve a capacity of 4 million m³/day, that is over 50 percent.

The average annual outlays for water pollution control in the industry amounted in the current five-year plan period to 2.1 billion zlotys. The implementation of the 1976-1980 plan concerning protection of waters is highly unsatisfactory. The promotion of tasks by the end of 1979 in industry amounted to 8.4 billion zlotys, that is 57 percent, compared to 14.8 billion zlotys envisioned in the plan (without the share of municipal sewage treatment plants). The increase of capacity achieved in 1976-1979 was only a little over 1 million m³/day as a result of the completion of the construction of 307 industrial effluent treatment plants and constitutes only 38 percent of the amount envisaged in the five-year plan (2.8 million m³/day). Assuming a complete fulfillment of the tasks of 1980, even then the industrial-type ministries will not utilize 2.6 billion zlotys, that is, 18 percent of outlays of the current decade.

GREECE

BRIEFS

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION--Law 998, Art. 45, paragr. 5 and Art 56, paragr 3, call for an economic-technical report on measures for preserving the environment and landscape and for minimising consequences upon the social environment whenever new, major industrial investments are contemplated. Applicants have to submit such reports to the Area Planning and Environment Section at the Ministry of Coordination. The lines on which such reports have to be compiled are currently being worked out and will appear in a joint decision to be issued by the Ministries of Coordination, Industry and Agriculture. The elaboration of such studies and preparation of resulting reports will not be in lieu of but additional to the report which every prospective industrial investor is at present called upon to submit concerning disposal of factory wastes, solid or liquid. (Editor's comment: The Government is pressing hard for regional development and wants new industrial plant away from built-up areas, except, of course, for cases where plant is put up in official industrial estates. This, therefore, means rural districts but there is a further restriction which says that arable land may not be used for factories, from now on. This leaves only natural forest and bush land but is likewise protected by environmental preservation laws. For these reasons it was felt necessary to draw up a joint decision by the Ministries of Coordination, Industry and Agriculture specifying exactly what is required of prospective industrial investors. As usual, the rules are likely to be fairly stringent on paper, irrespective of the degree to which they are observed later). [Text] [Athens HELLENEWS EXPRESS in English 15 Jan 81 pp 4, 5]

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